

MINUTES FOR MAY 7, 2009
MEETING OF THE PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members Present: Erwin Mack, Chair; Alyce Ortuzar; Leslie Hamm for Ken Hartman, BCC Regional Service Center; Peter Moe, MSHA, MHSO; James D'Andrea, MCPS; Jack Strausman; Arthur Holmes, MCDOT; Alan Migdall; Lt. Ronald Smith, MCPD; Bill Bronrott Vice-Chair; Steve Friedman; Nestor Alvarenga, CASA de Maryland, for Doris Depaz

Members Absent: John Howley; Ben Stutz for Councilmember Valerie Ervin; Doris Depaz; Colleen Mitchell; John Britton, Municipal League

County Staff: Tom Pogue, Community Outreach, MCDOT; Jeff Dunckel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator, MCDOT; Larry McGoogin, Safe Routes To School Coordinator, MCDOT; Fred Lees, Traffic Engineering and Operations, MCDOT; Emil Wolanin, Chief, Traffic Engineering and Operations, MCDOT

Guests: Charlie Crawford, Disabilities Commission; Harry Thomas, Rockville Traffic & Transportation Commission

1. Committee Business:
 - a. Review Minutes from March 5, 2009 Meeting – Approval/Changes
 - b. Departure of John Howley and Chuck Kines
 - c. Plans for Preparing Annual Report
 - d. Update Silver Spring Library – Planning Charettes
2. PTSAC Mission Statement and Work Program Description
 - a. April 7 Meeting With DOT Director, Art Holmes
 - b. Preparation of Mission Statement and Work Program
 - c. Discussion with Committee
3. Pedestrian Safety Initiative FY 10 Budget Request
 - a. Action Plan – PTSAC Comments/Approval
 - b. County Council Recommendations – Reductions in Education
4. Pedestrian Signal Engineering – Making Ped Signals User Friendly
 - a. Observations from the roadways
 - b. Implications for County's pedestrian signals – timings and feedback
5. Piney Branch HIA – Planned Actions and Pedestrian Survey Results
 - a. First Actions Being Implemented
 - b. Issues under discussion with State
 - c. Pedestrian Survey Results
 - d. Proposed Education/Outreach Plan
6. Bikeway and Trail Designs on State Projects – Providing for Peds and Cyclists
 - a. Recent concerns on BRAC
 - b. Implications for Other State Projects in County
7. New Business/Committee Comments:
 - a. New Business:
 - b. Press Event – May 14, 10:00 am: US 29 Sidewalk Celebration
 - c. Bike to Work Day – May 15
 - d. New Members and Reappointments
 - e. Selection Committee
 - f. Other items?
 - g. Next Meeting Date: July 2
8. Adjourn

1. Committee Business:

Chairman Erwin Mack started the meeting promptly at 7:00 pm.

MOTION: The minutes from March 5, 2009 meeting be approved – approved unanimously.

Departure of John Howley and Chuck Kines: - John Howley turned in his resignation in late. Chuck Kines notified us last week that he received a new assignment in Park and Planning – MNCCP will designate Justin Clarke as his replacement. We have one vacancy and several people to apply for reappointment: Steve Freidman, Colleen Mitchell, Art Holmes, Ron Smith and John Britton

Plans for Preparing Annual Report – there needs to be an annual report prepared by the committee – a group needs to be formed that identifies issues and reports on the focus on issues dealt with last year, as well as upcoming issues. The report is due in November 2009. We missed deadline last November and need to try to put something together for next fall – should we start now or next meeting – defer to committee – open for discussion – Peter Moe suggested we should submit minutes from last year w/cover letter and have it from the Chair. This will serve as the report until we can put together something better for next year. Erwin Mack– there are all new members now – should explain that we were not in a position to write a report, but no excuse not to have this report by November 2009. Alan Migdall suggested that in addition to minutes, have a section of thoughts and concerns for past and upcoming year from members – either a group summary or something from individuals so people get a sense of committee’s focus – suggested a members addenda, have by next meeting retrospective to put in the file – we have binders have other thoughts submit at next meeting – anyone want to set up committee for the November Annual report

Tom Pogue has mentioned we never had a committee before to submit a report and has never seen a report from this group as far as he knows. Bill Bronrott said, in the past, Lisa Rother has helped in putting together responses, goals, activities and future recommendations in the annual report. This is not a lengthy report. Jeff Dunckel says the BCC board has several examples that the committee can follow.

Erwin Mack – this should be a matter of record for the next meeting for appointing a committee, providing you time to decide if you want to be on it – so we can set up official group.

Update Silver Spring Library – Planning Charrettes – Erwin and Jeff attended the charrette in April, along with Colleen Mitchell. Thank Mitchell for her preliminary work that was very valuable and an excellent presentation but couldn’t be here tonight. Mack stated that it has been suggested that this committee should not have been so involved with this issue, but what we did brought results–the tenure that evening was a concern about ped safety where ground level people weren’t being taken care of – as to what Mitchell wrote and everyone agreed with – Erwin believes they will come back at some point about the pedestrian bridge. Mack suggested the committee may want to accommodate this given their current emphasis on ground safety and accommodations for pedestrians on the street.

Jeff Dunckel said it was a good, open planning charrette: Don Scheuerman, Department of General Services, was the prominent presenter and speaker. He was fielded questions and answered the concerns he had heard from the committee – trying to develop a comprehensive approach to pedestrian safety. The question was asked by one of the audience what was being done for ped safety with pedestrians coming to the library from 360 degrees – Scheuerman said all the things they were doing on safety on the roadways. Overall it was a successful meeting with many of the concerns expressed by the PTSAC being addressed.. Mack wasn’t aware of the incredible concerns of the Purple Line running through the library building and the architecture to support it: parking, housing, a very

challenging design.

Alyce Ortuzar asked if the community was well represented. Dunckel said the predominance were officials – 30-40% was community - had 40-50 people there total. It was widely advertised, but a concern was that the location was hard to find and far away for downtown silver spring – they are relocating future meeting locations to the downtown area. The project is in conceptual design, so the comments from the PTSAC came at a good time. Scheuerman talked generically about the things that would be considered in design of roadways and access points; he addressed the comments made by the PTSAC in March, and reflected it in his presentation.

2. PTSAC Mission Statement and Work Program Description

Mack met with County staff (Art Holmes, Bill Selby, Tom Pogue and Jeff Dunckel) on April 7 to discuss the committee's purpose and to talk about issues coming up with simple point of what it is that we are doing? A purpose, mission and work program statement was drafted for the committee to consider – it was distributed to the committee.

Steve Freidman raised concern about the lack of description on bicycles. Friedman asked that this language be added to the statement. Peter Moe concurred but asked if we were tracking bicycle issues and improvements in this committee. Moe moved that the committee vote on whether to accept the PTSAC Mission Statement. Moe agrees to adding bikes, but this creates two reference documents focuses exclusively on pedestrian that we measure our progress - - but what do we measure bicycle improvements against– the bike master plan? The 2007 Ped Safety Initiative does have language stating the objective of improving bicycle safety. Alan Migdall pointed out that the performance measures for bicycles in the Action Plan are blank. These need to be filled in; then there is something to measure.

Jeff Dunckel summarized the history of the program – this was started, with Bill Bronrott's leadership, with the issuance of the 2002 Blue Ribbon Panel Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Report (distributed in tonight's meeting packet) – back then, we worked on many fronts to implement many things. County Executive Leggett then came up with the 2007 Ped Safety Initiative which is a strategic plan with timelines and proposed budgets to implement the things listed in the original 2002 plan. This gave rise to DOT's 2008/2009 Action Plan - we needed to have a roadmap on how we were going to get it done and secure the needed budget – this is the implementation plan of County Executive Leggett's strategic plan so these 3 documents together comprise the County's pedestrian safety trilogy.

Moe recommended including the statement into the third document – the Action Plan - with the performance measurements for bikes. Just reference in the Mission Statement, that this is part of the Action Plan - -and call it a day.

Mack stated this is not a legal document, just a working document. We are coming to a point where we won't be zeroing in on a single intersection or a single point of reference to the exclusion of the rest of the County. Mack's responsible to guide each member as they come up with concerns to say yes this is a problem the committee should deal with - - if it is of value to the whole County. Problems at individual intersections should be directed to Fred Lees' office. We are to focus on issues that have a total county perspective in everything we do. Migdall's email on Pedestrian Signals was cited as an example – a specific issue was put into the context of a County-wide problem.

MOTION: **Mack called the question: the Committee accepts the Mission Statement and Work Program as a guide and reference to how the Committee will conduct business, with the amendment that we would include a reference in the document to being part of the County's Pedestrian Safety Action Plan. Motion passed unanimously.**

3. Pedestrian Safety Initiative FY 10 Budget Request

MCDOT submitted our pedestrian safety budget to OMB in March; the County Executive Leggett then approved and submitted the budget request to the County Council on March 16th. Dunckel stated that we got much of what

we asked for – a significant bump up in the program. Originally we requested an additional \$4.1 million in new funding for the ped safety initiative – this would receive a lot of support from the Council, with a full Council session held last Tuesday. (Handout of budget spreadsheet) This is their recommendation from their session - not officially approved yet– we requested \$4.1 million, we got \$3.9 million. The Council scaled back the education effort and the pace of the assessment and changing of traffic signal timing. Art Holmes explained that the Council confused education with outreach - - outreach is considered the same as advertising that is generally not supported by the Council. We are not about advertising, but about educating people on safe pedestrian behaviors.

Ortuzar asked about how the final list compared to the original priorities set forth by the Committee in February. The current priorities reflect the priorities set forth in February. Holmes pointed out that, though you always want more money, we did pretty well in an austere time.

Much discussion ensued about the sidewalk portion of the budget. Ortuzar thought this should be the highest priority. Sidewalks did get a significant increase of \$1.2 million dollars (added to the current \$1.0 million program). Questions from the committee were asked regarding what the overall need was in the County and how MCDOT was deciding on what was needed and where. Was there a map of existing sidewalks and current or planned projects? Bill Bronrott asked about the assessments of Safe Routes to Schools, and whether that work included as assessment of where sidewalks were needed. Bronrott also cited the availability of State monies for sidewalks on State roadways – he had helped change the cost changing formula last year so it is no longer a 50-50 split, but a 70-30 State/Local split. Holmes emphasized that there are currently sidewalk projects underway on State roads, such as MD 108, and that the Safe Routes to Schools program was fully funded and provides another source of money to look at these needs for sidewalk connections.

Action: Mack requested that Migdall and Ortuzar write up, for the next PTSAC meeting, what they feel should be a recommendation from the Committee to the County Executive and the County Council on the priority need for sidewalks and increased funding - - not just in a single place, but as a principle throughout the County. Mack asked that this recommendation be emailed to the Committee prior to the next meeting so it may be considered.

Migdall, following up, asked for data on how many requests for sidewalks at specific locations had been received, how many miles of sidewalk exist, and how many miles of sidewalk have been requested or are needed. Holmes stated that providing this information would be no problem, and he would have the Engineering Division come brief the Committee on the MCDOT sidewalk program at the next meeting. Migdall asked his standing question of whether MCDOT could provide him a list of every request made for sidewalks. The answer was no. Moe did ask whether MCDOT could provide information on how the sidewalk projects are prioritized - - using locations such as senior centers, or schools, or whatever.

Action: A briefing on MCDOT's sidewalk program will be scheduled for the next PTSAC meeting. Questions members of the Committee want answered in the briefing should be submitted to Jeff beforehand.

Migdall pointed out that the performance measures in the Action Plan need to be added so that the committee can consider them. Dunckel requested that the committee review the Action Plan and provide feedback on whether it is a good implementation plan for the Pedestrian Safety Initiative; feedback such as Migdall's observation on lack of some of the performance measures is a good comment that we need to address. Friedman and Migdall indicated they would provide input to Dunckel before the next meeting on some of the missing performance measures.

Action: Add Missing Performance Measures to the July meeting agenda; Migdall and Friedman will get back to Dunckel with suggestions for missing performance measures – especially as they pertain to bicycles.

4. Pedestrian Signal Engineering – Making Ped Signals User Friendly

Mack introduced Migdall's email that discussed the need for improved pedestrian crossing signals. Migdall did a good job of citing specific examples, then relating the issue to the County as a whole. Migdall gave a brief rundown on the problem (see meeting packet). He cited problems at Gaithersburg High School on MD 355, and near his home on MD 28. People cross street without ped signals being activated. How can these signals be better designed? Migdall would like to form a subcommittee to learn about the County's pedestrian signals and what is possible to improve them. He would like to be able to make recommendations to the County on how these signals can be more people-friendly, encouraging people to use ped signals to cross busy roadways.

Mack proposed a subcommittee from the PTSAC meet under Alan's leadership and come back with a recommendation for the next meeting.

Emil Wolanin, Traffic Engineering and Operations Division Chief, provided an explanation of the County's program, stating that the traffic engineering industry has done a pretty lousy job in communicating the message on how traffic signals interact with pedestrians. Improvement is needed. The County is working to address this; countdown pedestrians heads are an example of improvements to make signals more pedestrian-friendly. Wolanin expressed support for Migdall's concern and stated that he would assign people from Traffic to work with Migdall's subcommittee. Wolanin pointed out that this was the third or fourth time the PTSAC has asked about this issue, and that this time, it would be could if the information on the topic could be documented for future members of the PTSAC.

Action: A subcommittee will be formed to work with MCDOT on studying pedestrian signalization and how it may be improved in the County; new innovative ideas will be explored and discussed, as well as short-comings of the existing signal systems. Recommendations will be provided to the full PTSAC Committee to approve and forward to the County Executive and the County Council. Members who will be part of the subcommittee, to be chaired by Alan Migdall, include Alyce Ortuzar, and James D'Andrea. Migdall will put out a request to the list serve; Dunckel will email the committee for more volunteers to work on the subcommittee.

5. Piney Branch HIA – Planned Actions and Pedestrian Survey Results

Fred Lees provided a summary of current actions: quick action items, like maintenance issues, were issued immediately as work orders to have the problems corrected - like lights not working or pedestrian signal buttons broken. Some mid-term improvements are moving ahead swiftly – like the need to upgrade lighting on sections of Piney Branch where wattage of 23 older lights will be upgraded and new lights will be installed on 7 utility poles where there is now no lighting (these will be full cut-off, high pressure sodium vapor, dark-sky-friendly lights). SHA is working with us to widen a sidewalk near Flower. We are continuing to meet with SHA on some of these bigger construction efforts – trying to put a price tag on the costs. This is a new process for the County - - we are finding a whole lot of opportunity to partner on some of these projects. That's a good and bad thing – good as it brings more money into the project, bad because it involves a whole lot more coordination which takes more time.

Action: Ron Smith asked that the locations where lighting is being upgraded be sent to him so that he can forward it to the district station to assist them in their crime prevention efforts.

Mack introduced the Piney Branch Pedestrian Survey results; Casa helped us with this. Mack was guest speaker in Nashville Tennessee at the Lifesavers Conference – his work in ped safety was recognized and they flew him and Mary Kendall (CSAFE) down – provided information at the conference on the survey in progress. Friedman asked whether the survey was specific enough as to the reason pedestrians may not feel safe (source of concern). Dunckel responded that the survey was intentionally trying to gauge an overall sense of safety, not specific things people were afraid of.

Dunckel described the process: Casa went out in February and administered the surveys. Those surveys were

tabulated in March. After tabulating the results CountyStat performed an analysis in April – helping us create the template for future surveys. Tonight, we distributed to the committee the draft “hot off the press.” Some of the results surprised us. We surveyed pedestrians in both Spanish and English – majority respondents spoke Spanish. We found that Spanish language participants walk more for multiple reasons. English peds seem to walk for one single purpose.. The majority of pedestrians are walking 20 or more times a week – a heavy pedestrian population there. Men and women - no statistical difference in frequency of walking. The base knowledge of safe pedestrian practices was high – the majority indicated that they use the crosswalks so they are educated in this – Spanish were more likely than English respondents to know when to cross w/signal. Spanish are more likely to say they always cross at crosswalk then English speaking respondents (80% to 50%) This tells us our assumption about Spanish speaking pedestrians being less knowledgeable about safe pedestrian practices is wrong. They know the rules of the road. Most respondents acknowledged they should use crosswalks and watch for cars. (Moe suggested that all those Street Smart brochures being handed out must be working.) Perhaps our education need not focus on teaching the correct safe behaviors, but rather focus on the consequences of not practicing safe behaviors. The reason for not using crosswalks was universal: in a hurry or the crosswalk was too far away. Feeling of safety – generally a middle of road response – 50/50: some felt safe and some didn’t. On the question pertaining to bicycles – of those who responded, 60% disagreed or strongly agreed that they feel unsafe riding a bike on the road – but there were a lot of non responders. We need to rephrase this question to “would you feel safe riding a bike on this road.” This survey was the first pilot for us. We do want to tweak it - - but we want comparable results too – we’ll take tweaks and comments. Perhaps our most important finding was that those that responded strongly that they used the crosswalk and ped signals to cross streets also responded that they felt less safe crossing the street. Crosswalk users feel least safe – there is an element of fear on why they are using the crosswalk. Those who are in fear may be more likely obey the signals and the rules of the road. So maybe to encourage safe behavior, we have to interject an element of fear of consequences if they don’t practice safe pedestrian behaviors. These conclusions are a preliminary draft looking for feedback.

Dunkel handed out a first draft of the Piney Branch Education/Outreach Plan. Approach is grassroots in nature – using community networking. Would like to meet with members of the committee to refine the plan. Working with Casa and CSAFE. Looking for more contacts and people to work with in the Piney Branch Corridor; wants to form a work group. Bronrott mentioned Nora Murphy in Silver Spring who has done a lot of work in education and social marketing with Latino and Hispanic communities. Dunkel stated that we have \$50,000 to do education in the Piney Branch corridor. The plan will be finalized in early June. Education will dovetail with enforcement activities.

Comments from the Committee: need to add churches and community centers to the plan; do a press conference for a kick-off entirely in Spanish with English translation; include the RTSP coordinators for Montgomery County, Christina Sinz and Dana Gigliotti; employ their bright green shopping bags with Spanish on one side and English on other side; we can leverage street smart materials and enforcement money; this information will be used for a baseline -18 months later we will do this again and will be able to see measurable results; problem with area being so transient – folks we educate today won’t be there tomorrow.

6. Bikeway and Trail Designs on State Projects – Providing for Peds and Cyclists

Peter Moe and Steve Friedman asked to address the issue of providing for pedestrians and bicyclist in road projects. Steve – initially this was an offline discussion – email exchange w/Jeff – but it does have county wide implications. Handed out letter dated April 15, 2009 from Montgomery County Planning Dept – closing Walter Reed where a large amount of staff being moved to Bethesda Naval – construction on campus has begun SHA has proposed road modifications – bicycle community is concerned that the proposed plans neglect opportunities to improve access and right away for cyclists that use Jones Bridge, Cedar and Beech and surrounding area as access points, moving east to west and north to south – also concerned about loss of opportunity to make future improvements for bicyclist. The current plan doesn’t allow for improvements now; plan restricts any opportunity for future improvements to the roads, as we learn more about what the traffic pattern will be influx of cars and other pedestrian activity in this area. Already very congested - - but is a popular cyclist route.

Migdall has gotten response from Neil Pedersen (SHA Administrator) indicating that they are looking at this issue and that the service will improve; asked Larry Cole – what is VLOOC going to be after it is done – he didn't know if that calculation actually exists. Moe offered that Stephanie Yanovitz used to do this work but that she moved to the Baltimore Council and has been replaced by Mary Davidson. Not sure if Mary has this expertise. Wolanin cited possible CIP monies or Grants that have been issued to improve bicycle facilities in this area – contact Aruna Miller or Gail Tait-Nouri to find out.

Friedman understands the need to apply this concern County-wide issue of preserving and improving bicycle access; thinks this may be a good opportunity to get some synergy going with Montgomery County's Bicycle Advisory Group (MCBAG) – a good opportunity to serve each others' mission.

Steve will head up a subcommittee on this issue of bicycle access (preserving and improving it) – he will recruit Alan Migdall to serve – for BRAC the timeline for when SHA is going to work on plans and do the work is going to be most important.

Bill Bronrott – Get in touch with Andy Scott at Maryland DOT, need to get in touch with actual engineers assigned to this project. (Peter Moe suggested Mary Dietz)

Friedman raised a carryover item – a Chevy Chase resident brought up a concern regarding Wisconsin Avenue and the safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists in mile stretch between Friendship Heights and Bradley Blvd – will be merged into Peter Moe's bicycle issue – put in County-wide context.

Peter Moe – Has an issue that involves legislative concern, cyclist concern, and driver concern. During past legislative session, there was effort to change law to enable bikes to use crosswalks – was unsuccessful. Moe started getting emails that Rockville police were enforcing law that bikes could not use sidewalks and crosswalks, that bicycles were vehicles. Can we do something about this – where there are side paths bikes are to use crosswalks. Now motorists are bringing this up. Concern about whether motorist who has green can see approaching peds, joggers, bikers, etc. when turning. The current law is not clear. Moe volunteers to Co-chair a subcommittee to work on this issue. Should probably involve Rockville police. We need recommendations for future legislation. Migdall stated he started a yahoo group for bike law issues so people can coordinate what goes on in Legislature. Moe clarified that he can not lobby on any bill but can coordinate and participate in discussing legislative ideas in the PTSAC.

Action: Steve Friedman and Peter Moe will Co-Chair a subcommittee focusing on bicycle safety and access issues, including legislative needs. Alan Migdall, Alyce Ortuzar, and Ron Smith will serve on the subcommittee. The subcommittee will coordinate with Jeff Dunckel on when and where they will meet and report to the full PTSAC on their actions

7. New Business/Committee Comments:

Mack stated that he, Pogue, and Dunckel will be sure the committee gets written materials for PTSAC meetings one week before the meeting. Wisconsin Avenue issue - - concern about single narrow, 3 ½ ' sidewalk on west side of Wisconsin. Bikes and peds share sidewalk; creates conflicts and hazards. Ideal solution is to have separate bike lane connecting Friendship Heights to downtown Bethesda - - not likely to be implemented. Until the ideal solution can be enacted, Friedman recommends installing signage on either end of the mile stretch, alerting users to the shared use of walkers, joggers, and bicycles. This would require an enforcement effort as well to be sure bicyclists are ringing bells or yelling out when approaching pedestrians. Topic will be deferred to the bicycle subcommittee – Fred Lees will consult with the subcommittee on the issue. Lees states it is an issue for the entire County on how to alert pedestrians and bicycles that they are sharing these facilities.

Press Event – May 14, 10:00 a.m.: new US 29 Sidewalk Celebration - invited PTSAC members to attend and/or speak. “Click it or Ticket” press event is going same day. Friedman - Bike to Work Day is May 15 – Encourage all to ride to work, register at WABA.org– Steve Friedman will be awarded as bike commuter of the year – ceremony

at North Bethesda site at Nuclear Regulatory Commission at 9:00 a.m. . New Members and reappointments– Dunckel in process of advertising positions. – We need to have a selection committee to do interviews; Friedman did last time. Mack volunteered.

Bronrott mentioned we are approaching the end of school in 5 weeks we used to routinely do end-of-school-beginning-of-summer pedestrian safety education enforcement promotion. Recommended we do media event. We could do Tuesday 16th – schools have half day. Second item – safe routes to school will be big party of authorization of the Federal service transportation program - would be a good idea for the county to communicate to our Congressional delegation that we want them to do whatever they can to ensure safe routes to school is in the transportation bill and fully funded, since these dollars are important.

Larry McGoogin – in packet there is a SRTS work flow – please take time to look at it and send me any comments. Lastly there is a bike drop-off giveaway Briggs Chaney middle school this Tuesday – they go to bikes for the world organization – refurbishes old bikes and send to Africa.

Next Meeting Date: July 2, 2009.

July 3rd is a Federal holiday Mack asked who has a problem with July 2 – only one hand raised. Dunckel will send an email letting folks know what we will do.

(Note: the July 2 meeting was later rescheduled to July 9, 2009)

Adjourned at 9:10pm